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Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 PC-01 L-02 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 /041 W
---------- 115678
R 011000Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3364

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 1739

LIMDIS

PASS PEACE CORPS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CM

SUBJECT: GURC REQUEST FOR PCV REPATRIATION

REF: (A) YAOUNDE 1422; (B) STATE 96463

1. OUR EFFORTS TO DATE TO OBTAIN CLARIFICATION/WITHDRAWAL GURC REQUEST FOR REPATRIATION OF PCV'S STEEBY AND KINZELMAN, HAVE NOT BEEN PRODUCTIVE. I HAD BEEN HOPEFUL THAT PRESIDENCY ASSISTANT SECGEN SENGAT KUO WITH WHOM I DISCUSSED MATTER INFORMALLY ON MAY 8 WOULD BE ABLE FIND SOLUTION TO PROBLEM. DESPITE HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH AFRICAN LIBERATION COMMITTEE MEETING, CAMEROON NATIONAL DAY CEREMONIES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH MADE PRESIDENCY A VERY BUSY PLACE AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME, HE DID LOOK INTO CASES. ON MAY 24 HE SENT ME A HANDWRITTEN REPLY FROM HIS HOME WHERE HE LAID UP.

2. IN THIS NOTE, COUCHED IN FRIENDLY TERMS, SENGAT KUO INFORMED ME THAT STEEBY AND KINZELMAN WERE APPARENTLY BOTH BEING REPROACHED FOR THE SAME TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND THAT IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR THEM TO CONFORM TO GURC REQUEST. GURC DID NOT CONSIDER IT NECESSARY, HE OBSERVED,
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TO COMMUNICATE REASONS FOR ITS ACTIONS TO INTERESTED PARTIES.

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HE COULD ASSURE ME HOWEVER THAT DECISIONS OF THIS KIND ARE NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY, PARTICULARLY WHERE COOPERATION ACTIVITIES ARE CONCERNED AND THAT GURC COUNTED ON FRIENDS TO BE UNDER-STANDING. HE LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION BUT HIS ILLNESS HAS PERSISTED DURING MOST OF INTERVENING PERIOD. I HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT I CAN SEE HIM ON MONDAY, JUNE 3.

3. IN MEANTIME IN VIEW SENGAT KUO RESPONSE AND UNAVAILABILITY I DECIDED THAT I SHOULD PURSUE MATTER THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS. I THUS MET MORNING MAY 31 WITH FONOFF SECGEN OWONO, LEAVING NOTE CONTAINING APPROPRIATE POINTS CONTAINED REF. B TOGETHER WITH OTHER FACTORS WHICH I FELT GURC SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDER-ATION. (COPY OF DRAFT NOTE FORWARDED WITH LETTER OF MAY 28 TO COHEN AF/C).

4. OWONO TOOK UNDERSTANDING VIEW OF OUR CONCERNS AND INTEREST. AT SAME TIME IT EVIDENT THAT HE REALIZES DELICACY OF A SITUATION WITH SECURITY IMPLICATIONS. I THINK HE WILL MAKE

GENUINE EFFORT TO GIVE US AT LEAST A BETTER IDEA OF GURC CONCERNS AND TO CLEAR UP THE RECORD IF IT IS AT ALL POSSIBLE. AT SAME TIME I SENSED HE FELT VOLUNTEERS SHOULD PLAN LEAVE COUNTRY, IRRESPECTIVE OF OUTCOME.

5. LAST EXTENSION OF KINZELMAN'S TOUR CARRIED IT TO MAY 31. BOTH HE AND WIFE ARE QUITE DETERMINED NOW TO LEAVE. ACTING PCD HAS ARRANGED WITH SECURITY HEADQUARTERS THAT THEY RETURN TO BAMENDA FOR WEEK TO PACK AND THAT BAMENDA AUTHORITIES BE SO INFORMED. (PENDING ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT, WE HAD HAD THEM COME TO YAOUNDE AND THEY SPENT LAST WEEK WITH FRIENDS IN DOUALA.) I EXPLAINED THIS TO OWONO STATING THAT IT IN NO WAY LESSONS OUR CONCERN TO STRAIGHTEN RECORD ON KINZELMANS, ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF DEVOTED SERVICE IN CAMEROON. OWONGO SUGGESTED THAT IF POSSIBLE HE WOULD TRY TO GET A LETTER OF THANKS FOR SERVICES FROM APPROPRIATE GURC MINISTRY.

6. OWONO ASSUMED STEEBY WOULD ALSO BE LEAVING BUT HE DID NOT DEMUR WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT MANY UNNECESSARY COMPLICA-CONFIDENTIAL

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TIONS MIGHT BE AVOIDED IF STEEBY REMAINED IN YAOUNDE, PENDING CLARIFICATION OF HIS CASE. STEEBY IS AGREEABLE TO THIS. IN MEANTIME PC/CAM IS EXPLORING POSSIBLE OPENING FOR HIM IN CAR.

7. COMMENT: I DOUBT THAT GURC SECURITY HAS ANYTHING MORE DAMAGING ON KINZELMANS THAN UNEASY CONCERN OVER THEIR ACTIVITIES STEMMING FROM THE WIDE ASSOCIATIONS THEY HAVE

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DEVELOPED DURING THEIR FIVE YEAR STAY BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT WEST CAMEROON. PARTICULARLY SINCE AFO-A-KOM BUBBLE OF LAST FALL, THEY HAVE BEEN SOUGHT OUT BY INCREASING NUMBERS VISITING JOURNALISTS AND AFRICAN ART ENTHUSIASTS SEEKING BACK-GROUND MATERIAL AND INSIGHT. STEEBY'S CASE, WHILE LAUGHABLE TO US, PROBABLY HAS CREATED SOME UNEASINESS AS WELL, OR AN UNWILLINGNESS OF PART OF LOCAL SECURITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE OVER-ZEALOUSNESS. IT CAN NOT BE EXCLUDED THAT A GENERAL TIGHTENING OF SECURITY OBSERVABLE HERE FOLLOWING NIGER COUP COULD HAVE BEEN CLINCHING FACTOR.

WHILE OBSERVING HABITUAL RETICENCE WHERE SECURITY

MATTERS ARE CONCERNED, GURC AUTHORITIES HERE HAVE SHOWN SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD PROBLEM, HAVE NOT PUT PRESSURE ON US TO GET VOLUNTEERS OUT (DESPITE MORE THAN MONTH THAT HAS ELAPSED) AND STRESSED THAT REQUEST FOR DEPARTURE MUST NOT BE CONSIDERED UNFRIENDLY ACT. WE WILL CONTINUE PURSUE.
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